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Senate

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

U.S. ARMY SERGEANT DANIEL R. GIONET, PELHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Mr. GREGG: Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to U.S. Army Sergeant Daniel R. Gionet, a brave young American who gave his last full measure in service to our nation while deployed with the U.S. Army to Iraq, a land far overseas from his Pelham, New Hampshire roots.

Daniel was a 2001 graduate of Pelham High School where he was a three-season athlete competing on the school's football, baseball and wrestling teams, winning the sportsmanship award his senior year. Friends say he was a team player and the type of guy who, no matter where you went or what you did, could have fun and make you laugh.

Daniel Webster, speaking of early American leaders said, "While others doubted, they were resolved; where others hesitated they pressed forward." In this spirit, Daniel joined the U.S. Army when he turned 18 and left for basic training after graduating from high school. He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery Regiment, Fort Drum in upstate New York, and served at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, from July 2003 to May 2004 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Believing in what he was doing and wanting to make the world a safer place, he re-enlisted in the U.S. Army to become a medic after his original tour ended in May 2004. After training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, he was assigned as a Health Care Specialist in the 1st Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. In December 2005 Daniel deployed with his unit to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Tragically, on June 4, 2006, this brave soldier, and a comrade from his unit, died of injuries sustained while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq when an improvised explosive device detonated near their M1A2 tank dur-

ing combat operations. Sergeant Gionet's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon 2, Combat Medical Badge, and Expert Weapons Qualification Badge.

Patriots from the state of New Hampshire have served our nation with honor and distinction from Bunker Hill to Baghdad B and U.S. Army Sergeant Daniel Gionet served in that fine tradition. Honor, humor and huge hugs, according to family and friends, those were among the qualities Daniel shared with others. They remember him as a true patriot, who had a love for his school, his town, and his country. He was dedicated to serving his nation during these chaotic and violent times because, in his heart, he felt it was his duty.

My heartfelt sympathy, condolences and prayers go out to Daniel's wife Katrina, to whom he was married in November 2005, as well as to Daniel's parents, Daniel and Denise, brother Darren, sister Alycia and other family members and many friends who have suffered this grievous loss. The death of Daniel, only 23-years-old, on a battlefield far from New Hampshire is also a great loss for our state, our benevolent nation and the world. He will be sorely missed by all; however, his family and friends may sense some comfort in knowing that because of his devotion, sense of duty, and selfless dedication, the safety and liberty of each and every American is more secure. In the words of Daniel Webster – may his remembrance be as long lasting as the land he honored. God bless Daniel R. Gionet.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.